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THIS LONG-PREPARED Indian number coincides with the belated interest which is now replacing previous indifference towards India. It is not the first number we have had in which India has been the main theme and I hope it will not be the last. It may be a little less "outspoken" than before, but in these dark days one does not want to look for trouble nor to add to anyone else's.

Much might have been averted had the Government at the beginning of the war shown more inclination to reconsider the position of India. Now, two and a half years later, "something is going to be done about it." That something has been done, grudgingly rather than gracefully, not with a change of heart but by a hand that has been forced. It has been done, in short, more in deference to the broad hint of a Chinese generalissimo and to the threat of the Japanese hordes than out of understanding of the wishes of India herself.

In short, whatever is offered is offered in the spirit that has characterized British rule in that country—a spirit lacking understanding and vision on the one hand and courage and even expediency on the other. We ourselves may not find it paradoxical that we

stand as champions in Europe of a liberty we refused India; we ourselves may cheerfully endure our own habits of belated and makeshift compromise; but they are not necessarily endearing to a race of another cast of mind, and it is as some contribution to a more general understanding of that mind that this number is presented.

We have always been fortunate in the number of Indian writers who have sent us their work. Several of those appearing in this issue have contributed before. Dr. Mulk Raj Anand—to whom I am indebted for much help over this issue—has for long been a regular contributor of both stories and reviews. Iqbal Singh, one of the editors of the quarterly, *Indian Writing*, and author of *Gautama Buddha*, wrote on Indian Art (*Perspective for a Revaluation*) last February, and before that had contributed an essay entitled *India; a Contemporary Perspective*, to No. 20.

Other Indian writers whose work will be found in back numbers include Sarkis Megherian, J. Vijaya-Tunga, Alagu Subramaniam, and K. Ahmad Abbas. In this issue contributors appearing for the first time are S. Raja Ratnam, who comes from Ceylon and writes in *Indian Writing*; Ajit Mookerjee, author of *Folk Art in Bengal* (Calcutta University Press, 6s.); and V. E. Narayana Menon, who is Senior Carnegie Scholar in English at the University of Edinburgh. Part of his work as Scholar, a study of Yeats, is to be published this spring. He studied music for several years in South India and performs on the classical Indian instrument, the veena.

BRITAIN'S BLIND EYE¹

(*A Retrospect*)

By S. RAJANDRAM

WITHIN A FEW hours of the declaration of war by Great Britain the Viceroy of India announced over the radio to the people of India that they too "were on the side of human freedom and against the rule of force". He explained to them the principles of international justice, morality, and reason involved in this new war, and caused astonishment by remarking that in no other country were these principles better valued than in India. There had not been even the pretence of consulting with the representatives of the Indian people before dragging them into the war. In this grave decision, the British Government simply believed that the wishes of the Indian people were either irrelevant or taken for granted.

I mention this because in this single act is contained the clue to the whole problem of Indo-British politics. The Viceroy's statement showed clearly that as far as India is concerned the assumptions and mental atmosphere of a century and a half of autocratic rule in India were still retained with a tenacity that is almost pathetic. To the British ruling class India was still fundamentally a country of inarticulate mass with a sprinkling here and there of "seditious fakirs" and communal agitators ready to oppress one another the moment British rule in India comes to an end. The significance of the forces which had arisen in India during the last two decades were either so little understood by the warped Imperial mind, or where it was understood, the dark

¹ (*This article had been passed for press before the Government's statement on 11th March.—Editor.*)

forces of reaction saw it as a challenge to the system of privilege and exploitation which they had so carefully preserved in India. The press which these people controlled fed the British people on myths in the hope of concealing from them the real character of the Indian National Movement. The lack of unity and communal strife in India were emphasized and magnified out of all proportions, and held up as justification for the continuance of British Rule. So many bogeys and red herrings had been held up before the British people that many were unaware of the conflicts and problems the Indian people were really trying to solve. Vaguely, somewhere in the back of their minds, the British people were conscious that Imperialism in India was morally wrong, but that soon through the idealistic endeavours of parliamentary reformers things would turn out well in the end.

This tendency to treat the Indian problem as the backyard family quarrel between Britain and India, and not as part of the world struggle between reaction and revolution, between oppression and freedom, was responsible for the false picture presented of the Indian struggle.

It is necessary, therefore, first to give a survey of the great change that has come over India since the war of 1914-18, and then to estimate the position of India in relation to the present war and world politics.

The change that came over India after the last war had not much to do with the machinations of individual agitators and disgruntled lawyers but was part of the great awakening that swept over Asia. The upheaval that disturbed Europe spread first to Russia, and from there to India and China. Indian soldiers had fought

in the war on the understanding that their country would get self-government as a reward for their loyalty. Also Indian intellectuals who had until then looked up to the West as the forerunner of a New Age of uninterrupted progress felt a disillusion come over them. India, however, still retained its faith in the benevolent intentions of Great Britain, and were convinced that the defeat of the Kaiser would inaugurate a new era for India.

At the end of the war came the disillusionment, and with it the awakening of India. Britain failed to redeem the pledge she had made to India and the Indians felt they had been tricked, and whatever faith they had in British character died. The waves of unrest which swept over India were too widespread and consistent to be attributed to the chance work of agitators. India was caught in the grip of world forces and the new phase in India's struggle for freedom had begun.

Where before the masses of India had been ignored by the fighters for Indian freedom, now the masses became the strength of the Nationalist Movement. Where before the Nationalist Movement had been persuasive in its method, now it acquired a militancy which terrified some of the "moderate" elements in the Nationalist Movement and brought about a split which persists to this day. For the first time, because of its mass character, the Nationalist Movement was regarded as a serious menace to the interests of a British Imperialism, already a little shaky as a result of the war. The Revolution in Russia with its terrible message of world brotherhood, anti-imperialism, and social change had seeped into India and this only added to the panic which was already in the hearts and minds of vested interests in India, both native and foreign.

All these demonstrations of a new fervour were put down with the usual brutality. But India's struggle for independence went on, sometimes waning, sometimes bursting out with a startling brilliance, but all the time gathering strength and confidence in its ultimate victory.

The revolutionary struggles in China (1925-27), which were part of this world-wide struggle against reaction, were received with sympathy in India. In 1927 the Congress protested against the dispatch of Indian troops to Shanghai to put down the Chinese Revolution. From then onwards China and India drew nearer to one another, as it dawned on them that they were comrades-in-arms against a common foe.

Meanwhile, whilst in China and India the fight against Imperialism went on, in Europe the machinery of progress had halted, and then taken a reverse direction. As Fascism, which first sprang up in Italy and then in Germany, spread slowly over Europe, the reactionary elements within each country prepared the ground, prior to the military assault by their leader—Hitler.

India expressed concern over the state of things in Europe, not from any humanitarian motives, but because of the menace such trends portended for India itself. A victory for Fascism, she knew, was a victory for the very things she was fighting against at home. Again and again Congress had warned Britain against the folly of fraternizing with the Fascist powers and expressed her sympathy for Spain, Abyssinia, and other victims of Fascist aggression.

None the less Fascism spread over Europe and would have engulfed Great Britain too, had not the British people curbed in time their own reactionaries, and spared themselves the fate of France. However, in India these

evil forces, frustrated at home, dug in their claws still deeper.

I have thus far shown that India's fight for freedom far from being an isolated squabble between the white lawyer and the dark native over pointless terms in the "Sacred Trust" in India was as much a part of the war in China, the Battle of Britain, the war in Russia—the battle for the World. Any other approach to the Indian problem is as meaningless as it is futile.

The reader is probably familiar by now with the events that have taken place in India since 3rd September, 1939; how, after the resignation of Congress ministers, as a protest against Britain's attitude to India's demand for independence, a virtual dictatorship was imposed over the country; the arrest of Nehru and others and their release; the statement by the Prime Minister that India, one of the "united nations" which signed it, was to be excluded from the terms of the Atlantic Charter.

The Nazi attack on the U.S.S.R. and the war raging just outside India's borders has profoundly altered the character of the war for India. Where before the Indian people could only give their sympathy for the Allied cause, now there is an eagerness for an actual participation in this war. The statement to this effect by Nehru, soon after his release from prison, caused Gandhi, the pacifist, to relinquish his leadership, as this signalled a willingness to enter into this war.

The statement by General Chiang Kai-shek on 22nd February and his appeal to grant India freedom "without waiting for any demands on the part of the people of India . . . *speedily* give them *real* political power" is the realistic estimation of the situation in

India by a leader who knows better than anybody else how a people can be organized to fight the ruthless might of the Fascists. He knows that only a mass inspired by the ideals of freedom can fight the enemies of freedom. Spain, China, and Russia have shown how effective an uprising of the peoples can be; in contrast one has only to look at the recent tragedy of Malaya, where even the militancy shown by the Chinese community in the colony was frowned upon by the authorities.

Even at this critical moment in many of the responsible papers the old old hymn about there being no unanimity of opinion in India is being chanted. The question of minority rights is again rearing its ugly head. Among these minorities are included the Princes of India, who have tripped over one another's robes in their eagerness to aid the cause of democracy anywhere in the world, except outside their palace windows. The tenderness shown to these bejewelled, feudal reactionaries by the British Government only hampers the cause of freedom in India, and thus throughout the world. The Indian people do not want them. The alliance of the English Tories with the most reactionary elements in India, such as the Princes and other obscurantist elements against the people remains a considerable burden on a genuine struggle for democratic progress.

Most of these communal organizations are the stronghold of native big business, landlords and other reactionaries who fear the power of an emancipated India, and who, uncertain of their fate under a free India, have snuggled close to the British Raj for protection. The religious and other non-political differences implied in these organizations are smoke-screens to

hide the entrenched interests of forces that are already doomed. Religion has always been a useful stalking horse.

The Congress had, in the elections of 1937, shown its right to speak for the great majority of the people of India. It had a position of unrivalled power in eight out of the eleven provinces of India. Against the Congress, Britain's rulers balanced the Muslim League which had no visible authority behind it but suddenly claimed to speak on behalf of the eighty million Muslims in India. The Muslim League represents only a tiny minority of the Muslims in India (321,772 out of the total 7,319,445 Muslim votes at the 1937 elections). It is not generally known that the Congress has actually more Muslim members than can be found within the folds of the Muslim League.

The Congress asks for freedom for the whole of India without regard to party, religion, or caste. It is democratic, and looks forward to great economic and social changes in the structure of India. It has always expressed its desire not only to protect legitimate minority rights but also that certain minority rights would not be settled by majority vote.

The Muslim League, as also other communal organizations both Hindu and Muslim, stands for a divided India. The Muslim League is an exclusively Muslim organization and admits no one with any other party affiliation. Its temper is anti-democratic, for democracy is unsuited to its particular outlook.

The real problem of India, as I have shown, has nothing to do with religious controversies, but is part of the world-wide economic and social problems represented on the one side by the Fascist way of life, and, on the other, the Socialist way of life.

Therefore, to hold up political advancement in India because of the vested and obscurantist interests of minorities is to play into the hands of the world alliance of reaction. There is no real deadlock in India. The Indian people will be proud to play their part in this great struggle. They have for years struggled against those very powers which have brought misery and murder to the world. If the people of Britain will help remove the shackles from the people of India she will have four hundred million Allies on her side.

A cunning ruling class had fostered so much of bitterness and misunderstanding between the people of India and Britain. The havoc that British Imperialism has wrought upon the masses of India in their name will be hard to forget. But I am certain that as comrades in this great struggle both the peoples will be able to forge a new link more enduring than that forged by lathi-charges and exploitation.

MR. ELIOT'S KIPLING

By MULK RAJ ANAND

A Choice of Kipling's Verse, made by T. S. Eliot, with an essay on Rudyard Kipling, Faber and Faber, 8s. 6d., is likely, at first sight, to make people wonder why a poet and critic of Mr. Eliot's eminence has thought fit to resurrect a dead horse. Mr. Eliot himself foresees the shock upon the "hypothetical reader" and is conscious of the fact that he may be thought to have been "briefed in the cause of some hopelessly second-rate writer", "trying, as an exhibition of my ingenuity as an advocate, to secure some small remission of the penalty of oblivion." But he is a most disarming critic. Under cover of his admiration for Kipling's truly great qualities as a versifier, Mr. Eliot is able to pass him off not only as a considerable poet but as the dreamer of a great and noble dream of Empire, in spite of his own rather modest description of himself as "I . . . the war drum of the white man round the world". The publishers say: "We need not labour the significance of the fact that the selection has been made by a distinguished modern poet and critic at a time when all that Kipling prized is in danger." The public has responded splendidly, a reprint of the book having been called for within a month of publication. So the volume may, from one point of view, be regarded as Mr. Eliot's bit in the war effort.

And yet if the element of prejudice be eliminated in examining a fresh approach to Kipling, it must be admitted that Mr. Eliot has written the best essay on this author since the late J. M. Robertson published his brochure. By concentrating on what Kipling con-

sciously set out to do, by appraising the poems in which the ballad element rises to poetry, by drawing attention to his uncanny gift of second sight, by analysing his gift for the right word, the right metaphor, his acute sense of observation and his sheer craftsmanship, Mr. Eliot certainly enables one to re-read Kipling's verse with a new awareness. But, unfortunately, Mr. Eliot is on the defensive, and by not admitting any flaws in his hero, by overstating the case in some respects, he does not lessen the sense of irritation which arises from Kipling's recurrent vulgarity. For instance, where, in such verses as *Danny Deeever* or "*Follow me 'ome*", the rhythm as well as the content rises to poetry, the effect is marred by Kipling's deliberate use of cockney which, however essential to the form in which he wanted to say his say, nevertheless robs the sustained utterance of its tragic effect by the contempt for the sorrowing that becomes implicit in their grief. Similarly, the vitality of some of the other ballads is ruined by the patronage with which Kipling describes the lives of the soldiers among themselves or in their relations with the housemaids. This is not to deny the Buddhist kind of sympathy that Kipling feels for his fellow creatures, and even with animals, but I do not think that Mr. Eliot has answered the charge that Kipling is often inclined to talk down to his audience, that he plays up to the gallery and applauds Tommy Atkins only because he feels he must give him a stake in the Empire which he is fighting to win for the Queen, and because he is superior to Gunga Din and Fuzzy-Wuzzy (in spite of the bouquets he showers on them both), but that, in the end, he must keep his place ordained to him by the Almighty.

If, then, the contention that Kipling's verse often

reaches the intensity of poetry be admitted, as most people are likely to admit it after Mr. Eliot's brilliant essay, this poet may be judged separately for his *Weltanschauung*. And there, I think, Mr. Eliot cannot get away with it so easily by simply saying that Kipling was no ordinary imperialist, but had instead elaborated an exalted philosophy of Empire, in which the *responsibility* of the ruler to the ruled was more emphatically insisted upon, in which the *intent* of the "men above the Law" to civilize, "new-caught, sullen peoples, half devil and half child," was more important than anything else. What does Mr. Eliot quite mean by saying that "for Kipling the Empire was not merely an idea, a good idea or a bad one; it was something the reality of which he felt"? And how can Mr. Eliot say in one breath that Kipling felt "an awareness of grandeur" of Empire and in another breath that "he was certainly not aiming at flattery of national, racial, or imperial vanity", when each attempt at glorification simply oozes with Hitleresque pride in the domination of so-called inferior peoples? Such an apology is rebutted in a hundred different ways by Kipling's pages, and it would be more graceful for everyone to admit Kipling's greatness as a writer of verse and narrative prose and at the same time to acknowledge that he was the spokesman of the Empire. Whether he was exhorting his countrymen to cure their failings or asserting their right to conquer and to rule doesn't matter.

I do not share Mr. Eliot's enthusiasm for *Kim*, except that I agree it is a wonderful piece of naturalistic writing, full of remarkable observation, from the outside. It may be accepted as a book for children, a fairy tale, but the *dramatis personæ*, the Lama, the Babu, the Pathan

horse dealer, the C.I.D. Colonel, the Rani, as well as the inevitable Russian agents whom little Kim captures in his role as a prodigy of detection, are the stock characters of any United Services Club conversation of that period, without much reality of their own. The stories about India are more plausible, because they rest primarily on a situation, an invention, or a plot for their success rather than on a deep knowledge of character ; and here Kipling found his trained eye for atmosphere helpful, without the need to use any but the most rudimentary railway-platform acquaintance with human beings. So that these pieces evoke the background even if they sentimentalize Purun Bhagat, Dhunni, or Krishna Mulavaney, etc.

It seems ungrateful not to accept " this first citizen of India " whom Mr. Eliot offers us with all the weight of his great authority, but he is better seen as he really was, the natural product of an expanding phase of Empire and complacency, than as a righteous innocent " who didn't mean no harm ".

ON COLOUR BAR

By NANCY CUNARD

WE ARE CONSTANTLY reminded these days by the more bad-tempered of the tradespeople that "there's a war on". Quite so. And in view of the fact of the immense participation of the Negro, Coloured, Indian, and Colonial peoples in, what is,¹ after all, much more *our* war than it is theirs, the continued existence of Colour Bar in our midst is astounding—the bar *against* the Coloured races. Their contribution in every kind of way to the defence of England and of Empire is already an outstanding historical fact. That there should be prejudice against these most able and loyal subjects makes one exclaim as would a Frenchman: "*ça ne tient pas debout*"—it doesn't make sense—so illogical and nasty and absurd does it seem. Africans and Coloured West Indians have made sacrifices to come over here to fight and work, they do everything they can in their own countries to help Great Britain, and they are met, here and there and now and again, with manifestations of splenetic race prejudice or of unthinking race discrimination. Apart from the consideration of mere human values, does this not appear to be the worst possible policy? It cannot be said to be encouraged nowadays by the Government; it is opposed, shown up by progressive members of our community, by some of our very officials. One would like to suggest, however, that it would be of point if Government, along with its helpful "do's and dont's" to us, would issue a few instructions on *the scrapping of race prejudice and the Colour Bar, here and now. These things belong to Nazi Germany. They do not belong to "Democratic England"*.

(¹ *was* ?—Editor, II.3.42.)

There are many recent examples of the British Colour Bar ; consider this one which I will call " African Man Story ". In truth he should write it himself, as he told it me, with indignation but also with some laughter. " African Man " is at this moment working for Britannia, doing overtime too, so I will just quote his words :

" Some months ago I was sent by a Labour Exchange to a Government concern which had been applying for workers. I went with the Exchange letter in my hand. An official looked at it, then at me, noted my brown skin, and went away with the letter. When he returned he handed it back with something written on it. This was : ' Application refused—Coloured.' I shall always keep that paper ! Well, I was very angry and I went with my letter to the authorities who were very polite, said it must be ' some kind of mistake ' and that I *should* have that job. They asked why I had not come to them in the first place. I said I thought Labour Exchanges were for supplying applicants to war-time demands. I was given the job ! And I am getting along in it very well ; everyone I work with there is very nice to me."

This British Colour Bar is a most deplorable, but also a most curious thing ; a quite unreal thing too, because it does not even pretend to be thought out—as it certainly is in the U.S.A., where its manifestations at times amount to collective lunacy. In the U.S. there *is* rabid hatred for the Negro. Here I do not think there is *hatred*, but simply an unthinking prejudice, very much ignorance, and the belief which lingers on that, despite all sorts of signs to the contrary, the Negro is some kind of savage—after all. There is far more dislike of Coloured and Negro people in the West Indies on the part of many of the whites, creole residents and British officials, than in Great

Britain. Here it runs mainly like this : the hotels say, "*We* don't mind letting rooms to Coloured guests, but some of our other clients would certainly object." How many a time in this or that restaurant one has heard the words, "We don't serve Coloured here." In all Latin countries, and in France before Hitler, such a phrase would be out of the question. Such places, and even smart night clubs which catered especially to Americans, were shut by the police in accordance with the law, because of refusing to serve. In the case of "African Man" the plea that he would be unfit for the work could not be, and was not, invoked. His English was perfect, he was well dressed, visibly cultured, particularly well-spoken.

Coloured colleagues are "good enough" for their brother writers in the International and British P.E.N. Club which contains some of the finest and most famous intellects of this planet, and whose tenets condemn chauvinism and race prejudice. Its one-time President, Mr. H. G. Wells, enchanted me once for hours with reminiscences of the Coloured people he had met in the U.S. Our 17th International P.E.N. Congress was enriched by the excellent speech of Mulk Raj Anand, the young Indian writer, and with those of two Chinese poets. At another P.E.N. meeting recently, the West African, Ladipo Solanke, paid a magnificent tribute to the memory of the great champion of human rights, the late Henry W. Nevinson, and sang a funeral-tribute in his honour as would be done in Africa. The P.E.N. recognizes that freedom and internationalism of the completest kind are necessary to art. Yet Africans, Indians, and Coloured West Indians have difficulty in finding just a room to live in while they study or reside in England ! Oxford degrees, world-championships,

Duke Ellington and all his men (paid fabulous sums on the halls), the Coloured West Indian cricketers, Chiefs and Notables from Africa—no, *not* “good enough” for the Bloomsbury Hotel, “not wanted” in the Bayswater or South Kensington lodging houses, etc., etc. The British Museum—possessor of some of the finest bronzes in the world, those from Benin, Nigeria, and of priceless old ivories and gold and coral looted from Ashanti in punitive expeditions—and the West African student “in difficulties” because of his brown skin, his traditional, often very handsome, African features. The exquisite sculptures of old India in our Museums—but the Indian doctor, the Indian student having “the usual time” with our landladies and our hotel porters. Really, a charming picture is it not? Especially if we remember that we are fighting to keep this sort of thing flourishing in our midst, and in our colonies. Or *are* we?

Yet Colour Prejudice seems to be less than in the past (“there’s a war on” would account for some of that, but maybe we have progressed too. Obviously a Coloured person is best fitted to speak on this). We find the Coloured Boys of the R.A.F. in pubs which might have refused to serve them in mufti in the past, and truly indeed it would be pretty disgraceful were it otherwise. But is this “for the war only”? as has been questioned by a West Indian. What contrasts too in the official mentality! Some of their pronouncements make one gasp; others are sensible, honest, constructive—even if they do come somewhat late in the history of Empire. Here are two examples, one of each:

Said a speaker at a meeting organized by the Ministry of Information last autumn, the subject being “The Great Democracies”:—

“ The British Empire is the only Empire that has not been founded on force.”

Astounding ! Because history does show that, with the exception of the Gold Coast (of which some Gold Coastians say proudly, if not very convincingly : “ We were never *conquered* ; there was a commercial agreement ”) and one or two smaller places, every single one of the colonies *was* acquired by means of varying degrees of force. For whom can this remark be intended ? Everyone knows better than that !

The other official statement, made quite recently in the House of Commons, was not made, obviously, without expert knowledge. Mr. George Hall, Under Secretary for the Colonies, on 20th November last, said :

“ The public conscience has been awakened to the need for taking a far greater and more constructive interest in the social, economic, and spiritual welfare of the colonial peoples. Our duty now is to improve their lot, help and guide them to prosperity, develop their resources, and raise their standard of living to enable them to take an ever-increasing responsibility in ordering their affairs.” The *News Chronicle*, reporting Mr. Hall’s speech, epitomized further remarks of his as follows : “ It was no longer correct to think of an African as an infantryman with a rifle and bayonet ; Africans now supplied the man-power for heavy and light artillery, anti-aircraft guns, and engineering, signal, transport, and ordnance units. Colonials are building and repairing ships, and making a wide range of things from gas-masks and steel helmets to Diesel engines and radio sets . . . Saying that the intense loyalty of the Colonies to Britain’s war effort should make us grateful

and humble, Mr. Hall foreshadowed a great programme of colonial development after the war."

"Grateful and humble"—sentiments expressed by our Under Secretary for the Colonies, on behalf of the nation.

But it had not occurred to the hotels in Bermuda, British island possession in the Atlantic, that the Coloured Press delegates invited with their white colleagues *officially by the British Council* to come and see war conditions in England, should receive the ordinary treatment one expects from hotels, i.e.: a room.

It was an excellent idea of the British Council, for the West Indies, largely populated by people of Colour, are in the forefront of Aid to Britain and "Win the War" activities, in money raised, in volunteers, specialists now working in our factories here, fliers, etc. Twelve newspaper men, six white and six Coloured, arrived in Bermuda where a storm delayed the Clipper overnight. Here the Coloured members of the group were denied accommodation by every one of the hotels and had the greatest difficulty in finding a bed. Their white colleagues, it was said, did nothing to help, but all continued the journey together, and duly arrived in London. What can have been the state of mind of the Coloured journalists? Were any apologies made to them? The story figured briefly in some of our papers. Was the case taken up officially, a question asked in Parliament? No. Yet thanks to the International African Service Bureau, and the League of Coloured Peoples, a promise had been obtained in 1940 from our Government that every case of race discrimination that occurred here, if properly authenticated, would be duly investigated. Did this detestable incident not come

under that heading, or is Bermuda no longer considered British? It will go down as one more example of "Democracy and British Justice" in the very middle of the biggest war that mankind has ever suffered, and unreproved by "the oldest champion of freedom—Britain".

On 15th August last, at the I.L.P. Summer School, a Negro speaker put the Coloured worker's case pretty clearly. Said Chris Jones, a Barbadian seaman: "For forty years a rolling stone in every part of the world, I have yet to find a spot where under white domination elementary freedom is granted to subject races." That is true. With the relative exception of Brazil and other South and Central American countries, it is only in the U.S.S.R. that *no difference of any kind is made between races*. There equality is established, total, complete.

And we—a very sensible and fair-minded people *at heart*, we with our "greatest empire in the world", we, martyred and tempered in the bombings of England and the stress of war on land, on sea, and in the air, we, leaders of the Free peoples and nations—can we not hope to do the same one day as the U.S.S.R.? That, then, would mean that one could "look the Empire in the face". That, yes, would then be a true Commonwealth of Nations and Races. And of course this will come! But when?

Meanwhile—I am not alone in asking our Government to consider the passing of *a law* against Colour Bar in our country and possessions. For Laws, too, can form an important part of human progress.

TAGORE : A DETERMINATION

By IQBAL SINGH

MONUMENTAL IS THE term that best fits the character of Tagore's genius. In few contemporary personalities has been witnessed so strange a confluence of varied æsthetic and intellectual potentialities. This makes the task of an adequate determination of his work one of considerable difficulty. For it involves the application of criteria derived from many divergent, if not necessarily mutually exclusive worlds of discourse ; and ultimately these multiple criteria have somehow to be focalized to obtain a clear and comprehensive perspective. It would be true to suggest that in his astonishing versatility lies the secret of Tagore's strength as well as weakness. Strength, because the compass and magnitude of his output point to a seemingly inexhaustible reserve of creative energy. This energy in its expression does not invariably discover forms commensurate with its vast potential. Nevertheless it compels attention by the very fact of its prodigality. There is a saying in India that, no matter how much we rob the elephant, it is impossible to divest the noble beast of all its glory. As it is with the proverbial pachyderm so it is with Tagore. No matter how drastically we detract from his achievement there still remains, and will always remain, a residuum of essential and undeniable worth.

But in this strength resides also the weakness. Such are the inexorable exigencies of dialectics. The diffusion and diversification of the creative impulse tended to a kind of qualitative dilution. In art, as in life, a force is most effective at the level at which it operates strictly within its proper limits. Tagore was not prepared to

recognize any limits to his powers ; was not prepared even to recognize the necessity of such limits. Because of this he rarely approached that crystallization of effort which is the absolute precondition of a consummate work of art. It is significant that Tagore never evolved for himself an architectural conception of style. The periods of his prose no less than the rhythms of his verse are lacking in the principle of structural precision and finiteness. Diffuse, fluid, and repetitive, they evoke the amorphous, almost interminable curves of the Indo-Gangetic plain where horizons seldom define themselves into sharp outlines and distances appear to melt into nebulous infinitudes.

Tagore's poetry has in turn been over-estimated and under-estimated. Longevity is not altogether an unmixed blessing. Tagore lived long enough to see himself go out of fashion with the same unmerited suddenness as he had come into fashion. Yet in his later years he was producing work of a much higher order than the poetry of his earlier, more popular period. It is important to stress that his occidental reputation was, in any case, founded on false premises. The West, as he acknowledged himself, knew him through a medium which involved deliberate " falsification of his coinage ". It was an additional misfortune that his *Song Offerings* reached Europe through the mediacy of W. B. Yeats at a time when the shades of the Celtic Twilight had been deepened still further by the fog of Theosophical effluvia. Moreover, in its external aspects, though not in its inner cadences, Tagore's poetry lends itself to imitation with great facility. In India, as in fact throughout Eastern Asia where Tagore has been unquestionably one of the most dominant influences of our time, no poet has

offered greater temptation to the purveyors of pastiche. Consequently his work has suffered in no small degree from the ceaseless industry of his prodigal imitators. Gresham's Law is as ineluctable in the realm of literature as in the world of High Finance: the counterfeits, if circulated in sufficiently large numbers, succeed in discrediting not only themselves, but the genuine currency.

This is not all. In judging Tagore's poetry certain other factors must also be taken into account. To begin with, those who read him in English are at a distinct disadvantage. Of all the languages English is perhaps the least capable of reproducing his inspiration. It emphasizes his faults and fails to communicate his excellences. It is a fact, for instance, that he translates better into French. That translations are universally unsatisfactory where poetry is concerned is, of course, axiomatic. They give us merely the shadow of a thing and not the thing itself. This applies particularly to translations from Indian languages. For in India poetry still retains the essential quality of a plain-song: it is intended to be chanted rather than read. In the process of translation we lose not only the rich associations of image and metaphor, but something much more vital—the subtle and intimate melodic content which in the original sustains, and indeed forms an integral part of the poetic argument. Then there is the difficulty created by Tagore's excessive play with mystical phraseology. This came to him naturally from his peculiar environment and inheritance. The use of religious symbolism became with him in time an almost automatic subjective habit. And although it is by no means intrinsic to his thought and experience, which are ultimately humanistic in their implication, the modern mind is apt to feel impatient with a stylistic convention

trailing clouds of tedium from an outmoded mysticism. Finally there is the problem of Tagore's prolificness. Mr. Edward Thompson has observed that, in comparison with Milton's less than 18,000 lines, Tagore's published verse and poetic dramas amount to 100,000 or their equivalent. This calculation was made in 1925. Age in no way diminished Tagore's productivity and during the last fifteen years of his life he added no inconsiderable sum to the already impressive edifice of his work. No poet, not even one whose verse is conceived on an evenly high plane of significance, has the right to impose on his readers so Brobdingnagian a burden.

To insist on these difficulties is not to minimize Tagore's importance. Rather it is to clear the débris of uncritical adulation and equally critical disregard in order to see him in his true proportions. It has been said of Rilke that he gives one "an unquiet feeling of treacherous depth". This may or may not be true of Rilke, but the reverse of this proposition is certainly true of Tagore. His poetry communicates a sense of deceptive simplicity and transparency, at times even shallowness. On the surface it sounds so uniform a note that it is hardly possible to discern any serious evidence of inner development. *The Golden Boat* and *The Child* appear merely to articulate in a richer key what was already implicit in *The Broken Heart* and *Morning Songs*. Yet this is a very misleading impression. Underlying the apparent sameness and monotony of expression and apprehension, there are conflicting currents and tendencies, unsuspected depths and complexities.

Complexities, let it be added, both formal and thematic. Tagore's poetry is not simple either in its conception or its structure. Contrary to a widely shared view, in matters

of technique and style he was a very catholic experimentalist, highly susceptible to æsthetic influences. Analysis of his poetry would reveal echoes from sources as far removed in space and time and spirit as Vidyapati and Eliot, Kalidasa and Whitman. In a broad sense three distinct threads run through the imaginative fabric of his verse. The first originates in the Vaishnava poetry of Bengal with its characteristic tradition of folk mysticism which, though in its manifest intent revolving on the idea of the passionate yearning of human soul for an ecstatic union with the Divine, is in its content essentially a form of sublimated eroto-lyricism. The second is derived from the Classical Sanskrit Drama which, unlike its Greek counterpart, seeks to establish a basic unity by interpreting the human situation, not as a virtually mechanical reflex of some mythic fatality, but in terms of certain complex metaphysical categories of the principle of causality. The third emanates from the European, and particularly the English Romantic movement of the nineteenth century. These influences are operative at times separately, at times in varying degrees of conjunction, but at no point do they seem to be resolved into a lucid unity. It is this inability to achieve a synthesis that accounts for the presence in Tagore's poetry of many confused and inchoate resonances which give it an appearance of shallow externality.

Tagore was easily influenced, but it should not be assumed that he was a derivative poet. It would be more correct to suggest that he sought in his influences justification for moods and thoughts which were in effect genuinely his own rather than motifs for direct imitation. Somewhere in *Rousseau and Romanticism* Professor Irving Babbitt comments that the conceptions underlying

Tagore's poetry are often no more than pale reflections of attitudes popularized by the nineteenth century Romantics. This is an unfair formulation arising from an over-fastidious Classical bias, a half-truth based on a superficial analysis. For although it is true that Tagore felt, indeed could hardly help feeling, the impact of the intellectual and psychological backwash of the Romantic Movement which extended well into subtropical latitudes, its importance in his poetic evolution has been exaggerated. It was certainly the least felicitous element in his inspiration, partly because he was inclined to interpret it at its most obvious, descriptive level, and partly because he could not entirely shake himself free of the perverse fascination exercised over his mind in adolescence by some of the lesser Romantics, like Scott and the author of *Irish Melodies*. The influence of the Vaishnava tradition, on the other hand, was at once more positive and enduring. It was in its results a truly creative influence. If Chandidas and the poets who followed in the wake of the great religious ferment represented by Chaitanya were responsible for breaking the stultifying literary hegemony of Sanskrit, and thus bringing poetry into immediate contact with the people, Tagore accomplished something even more far reaching in its implications. It was in no mere revivalistic sense that he was instrumental in redeeming certain forms of folk poetry and music which were in grave danger of becoming extinct with the advance of industrialism : by adapting these forms to the demands of his genius he invested them with the grace and subtlety, the compass and universality of a major art. This transformation of existing material into a higher mode of expression must be considered Tagore's most distinctive contribution to contemporary Indian culture.

It does not, however, represent the limit of his contribution. On the contrary, there are good reasons for maintaining that in the historical estimation Tagore's novels and stories will probably rank even higher than his dramatic writings and poetry. It is, in fact, no exaggeration to claim that he remains incomparably the most authentic interpreter of Indian life and scene during an extremely poignant phase of the history of the Indian people. The significance of this particular phase is to be attributed to its transitional character. It was in the most precise meaning of the phrase a period of *sturm und drang*, the corresponding psychological curve modulating between the two opposite nodes of national disintegration and national self-assertion ; a period of profound change and reorientation containing within itself infinite points of conflict and contradiction ; a period charged with the passion of thwarted aspirations as well as the exultation of future promise ; a period, in the last analysis, of painful parturition and expectancy. To say that Tagore's novels and stories provide supremely convincing human documents of this epoch of transition is to stress the obvious. But that is not all. He has done more : he has interpreted all its variegated moods and nuances with a delicacy of perception and understanding which almost touches the highest perfection of art.

Almost, but not quite. Tagore's novels are so pre-eminently representative of a period, and within that period representative of a particular *milieu*—specifically the *milieu* embracing the middle classes and the heterogeneous strata of society adjacent or related to the middle classes—that they cannot altogether avoid a certain strain of parochialism both of time and place. Some of them, like *The Wreck* and *Gora*, have to-day actually dated

to the point of being unreadable. This remark, however, needs qualification. Goethe has observed that in judging a person we should remember that the excellences of an individual are his own ; his defects, of the age. As a generalization this is obviously arbitrary to a degree, but it has a very crucial bearing when we consider Tagore's writings. His defects are not so much his own failings as a writer as the defects of the life and scene he tried to recreate in his work. And even this is only a partial statement. It must further be added that Tagore had not only the remarkable gift of making virtue of necessity, but the still more remarkable gift of transforming his deficiencies into positive virtues. Perhaps it would be truer to say that this gift was in reality no more than a matter of coincidence. For it came from the fact that Tagore was deeply identified with the world he was portraying, so deeply identified that even at its most critical, his portraiture is never hostile or bitter, but fundamentally sympathetic. We may put it somewhat more precisely : his work is the product not of a sense of irritation and reaction, but of acceptance. It is significant that he never attributed to his characters sentiments and emotions which were objectively either beyond them or alien to their nature. This may have prevented him from writing a truly great novel, but it also prevented him from descending to the level of spurious writing. His characterization always retains a basic substratum of subjective verity which immediately distinguishes it from competent mediocrity.

The effusiveness of Tagore's style has often been a ground for adverse comment among his occidental critics ; and it must be admitted that it does detract considerably even from those among his novels which, like *The Home*

and the World, come nearest to greatness. This element, however, does not obtrude so much in his short stories. In handling this medium, Tagore displayed a complete mastery of his material, partly because here the form itself imposed certain inviolable conditions and limits which were conducive to concentration of effect. It has been argued that, what has sometimes been described as Tagore's "random-thought" story, is an attempt on his part to resuscitate the old Indian fable in a modern context. But this argument appears to arise from a misapprehension of the purpose of the fable as well as Tagore's method. True, in some of his stories Tagore consciously adopted the fable as his model. *The Trial of the Horse* represents, for instance, one of his most successful efforts in this direction. In the main, however, his stories follow a technique which is almost diametrically opposed to the technique of fable writers of ancient India. The technique of the fable is essentially algebraic in its intent ; it involves reduction of the individual character and experience to the point of abstraction. Pursued to its logical conclusion it leads us into a world of symbolic relations which are absolute and final, where the particular has, as it were, completely merged in the general, or to be more precise, in the typical. In striking contrast to this technique, Tagore's stories are concerned with the world of relativity. Even where symbolism is implied, the themes do not revolve on abstractions, but creatures of flesh and blood possessing complex individualities. The corresponding differentiation of character and experience is therefore realized on a scale which admits of infinitely greater variety and subtlety.

The pathetic is no doubt the dominant note in Tagore's work. He has, it is true, written stories which bear

witness to a lively scene of irony and humour. But his irony is seldom bitter ; his laughter is so compassionate that it often trembles on the verge of tears. He was, indeed, a man inextricably involved in the pathetic fallacy. His preoccupation with the problems of a suffering humanity has frequently evoked hostile criticisms. It has been contended that his writings smell too highly of mortality ; that they are aimed too obviously to appeal by titillating the lachrymal glands. This is, however, an unwarrantable criticism. It cannot be denied that in a lesser man obsession with the pathetic aspect of life might easily have degenerated into effusive sentimentality. But in Tagore this only sharpened his awareness of the tragic element which stirs in the heart of things.

The remarkable thing about Tagore was that he could express himself through media of utmost diversity with equal facility. He took up painting, for instance, when he was over seventy. There has been a tendency to treat his excursion into the field of visual arts as something in the nature of a *jeu d'esprit*. The B.B.C. commentator in his obituary remarks referred to Tagore's paintings as being "the apotheosis of the doodle". Even Dr. Coomaraswamy in introducing them has permitted himself one of his rare witticisms and observed that "although the poet must have looked at a great many pictures in his life, there is nothing in his work to show that he has seen them". All this may or may not be true, but it is irrelevant to the basic consideration that Tagore's paintings mark a positive and significant departure in Indian art in recent times. They are significant, not so much perhaps in actual accomplishment, as in their promise. It can be argued that viewed historically they seem to reflect expressionistic tendencies carried to their

logical extremity. Some of them literally overflow with that particular kind of " vitality " which Roger Fry quite justifiably described as distasteful. But that is not the point. The point is that they signify a violent, but absolutely necessary, break with a tradition no longer capable of anything beyond stale and tedious repetition of motifs and designs bearing no cognizable relation to contemporary experience. As such they are symptomatic of that type of " pulsation ", to borrow a geological term, which is the prerequisite of all major mutations in æsthetic no less than social development. They may lack many technical and other graces, but they possess one supreme virtue—they embody vision, not merely memory.

Ultimately, however, Tagore cannot be judged by any purely literary or æsthetic standards. There are in every age individuals whose total cultural contribution extends into a kind of fourth dimension which cannot be measured in terms of their tangible achievement. Tagore belongs to that category : he is greater than his work. He became something of a legend in his own lifetime. But the unusual thing about his legend is that it is based on a solid foundation of reality. Tagore is the first figure of Asiatic renaissance who rises from a crowd of personalities of more or less limited, parochial importance into a world perspective. It is because of this that he has become for the vast multitudes of the Asiatic world a symbol : a symbol not merely of individual greatness, but collective potentiality and realization. Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor says that humanity always needs a symbol. What he does not explain, however, is that a symbolic personality represents a most complex synthesis of concrete historical circumstances. There is perhaps such a thing as a genuine desire for vicarious group fulfilment

which is not necessarily a simple reflex of the psychological compensatory mechanism. And to the peoples of Asia who for more than a century have known no other destiny than that of pawns in the predatory game of rival imperialisms, Tagore symbolizes a manifest embodiment and consummation of their most deeply cherished social and cultural aspirations.

Tagore's relation to the Indian people must be seen in this general contest, though in the nature of things it is more intimate because it is more specific. My future, he once remarked, lies behind me. There is profound truth in this paradox.

His life and work have become an integral part of the very fabric of contemporary Indian culture. He summed up in himself a whole epoch. His was not merely a decorative but vital and dynamic personality. It formed a kind of bridge not only between India's past and her present, but also between her present and her future. Its impact on India's cultural development during a critical, formative phase assured respect for certain basic human values—assured respect even from those congenitally incapable of understanding such values. It was, moreover, a guarantee that neither the pharisaic formalism, which is the legacy of a decadent feudalism, nor the vulgar philistinism, implicit in commercialism which has come with the rise of capitalist economy, would be allowed to triumph. Finally, it was in no small part due to his prophylactic influence that Indian nationalism, even in its patently bourgeois form, never quite sank to the level of myopic tribal chauvinism. As Jawaharlal Nehru has aptly put it : “He has given to our nationalism the outlook of internationalism.”

Tagore was not, of course, a political writer. Nor, on

the other hand, was he an indifferent dweller of some remote mystical ivory tower. In some ways the growth and clarification of his political ideas offers a true index of the development of political consciousness in India during the past fifty years. Like most intellectuals of his class and age, he began by voicing his belief in the possibility of a synthesis of the so-called civilizations of East and West. It is interesting to record that one of his earliest essays takes up this theme and develops the argument at great length. In reality this theme, which has found repeated expression in endless variations among the middle class intelligentsia of India, was no more than a wish-fulfilment, an intellectual reflex of the political expectations of Indian bourgeoisie. It was a wish-fulfilment which, let it be added, was doomed to eternal frustration. Bitter political experience was to bring disillusionment : the rosy dream of "a union between between East and West" was to meet a brutal awakening in the blood-bath of Amritsar. Tagore shared in the general disenchantment of his class. Shared, but with a significant difference. While this chastened mood of disenchantment was to lead many intellectuals of his generation into a cul-de-sac of revivalism or isolationism, with Tagore it did the reverse : it turned his vision to wider horizons. As a result, he began increasingly to identify himself with the struggle of oppressed humanity everywhere. Above all he began to see in the stirring of the great masses of Asia and Africa the unfolding perspectives of a new civilization where culture and happiness will not be the monopoly of a class or race, but the common inheritance of man. To have perceived this, in spite of the limitations and prejudices of his class and time, affords us perhaps the final measure of Tagore's greatness.

INDIAN FOLK ART

By AJIT MOOKERJEE

FROM THE FOURTEENTH century onwards India has witnessed a mass cultural awakening. The centuries of suffering and privation brought a new vision to the suppressed humanity of rural India, which took a noble revenge on the dominating classes by reviving their heritage of ancient art and culture, linking India up with some of the most primordial forms of world art. But until recently nobody has taken the trouble to record the art and tradition of these people, and this is why the growth of Indian art is not yet properly understood.

Folk beliefs and tradition of India have a continuous history and have grown through the various elements in Indian life and extraneous influences. The effect of the assimilation of new cultural elements has provided a complex of established customs and beliefs which marked the operation of constructive social tendency. By the influence of these the incoming new elements are sublimated into the old cultural pattern, and the old is widened into fresh and often striking ways. This blending of different cultural traits in Indian life and thoughts resolves itself as a distinctive "cultural pattern".

Different sects and beliefs have co-existed throughout Indian traditional life. These range from Hinduism down to popular beliefs and folk-Buddhism on their common *Tantric* foundation. The influence of folk-Buddhism and the rise of *Vaisnavism* marked a great departure in the religious outlook of the Indian people. This is a period of constant revolt against the con-

ventional fetters of social and religious ideas. Chandidasa, the greatest popular exponent of *Padavali* songs, declared in the fourteenth century :—

“Listen, O brotherman, the Truth of Man is the highest of Truths ; there is no other truth above it.” The idea of glorifying humanity exercised a powerful influence over the popular mind. Gods tremble before men and even a woman like Maynamati compels the gods to obey her. The vast folk-literature of this time lavishly describes the people’s aspirations, exploits, and sufferings.

These different tendencies in social and religious life could not fail to influence the development of the people’s art. Indian folk art, obviously connected with religion, became conscious of its own æsthetic standard and developed according to its own tradition. Folk art of India thus corresponds to three types :—

1. Ritualistic : it is used in the service of rites associated with some beliefs and mystical ideas.

2. Utilitarian : social customs demand the object ; modes of manufacture and material qualities determine the form.

3. Individualistic : it expresses the feelings and emotions of the artist.

Ritualistic art may, again, be classified into three distinct types. In the pre-logical stage, art could not be clearly separated from nature. In India, innumerable natural stones known as *Salagram Silas* are still worshipped on a par with a sculptured deity. In the second phase, geometric representations having no sympathetic relation with any external form of life, may be seen. They require a minimum of essentials, two or three lines and a circle are sufficient to represent

a human or animal figure. The third represents the abstract, suggesting but not portraying any specific object. An illustration of a purely abstract design of a symbolic kind is rice-paste drawing known as *Alipana*. Although not representing a natural object, it certainly does represent an idea or even a succession of ideas : To take the cult objects of this category such as goddesses of childbirth and fertility, they are representations of a more or less summary kind without any naturalistic activity. This may be due to some ulterior motive either religious or symbolic.

Then there are the artistic renderings connected with the technical processes involved in the manufacture of utilitarian objects including pottery, basketry, cane works, textiles, dolls, and toys. In spite of local differences, however, these objects are mainly variations of the same theme. Owing to active commercial intercourse, these find their way about the country and are treasured possessions in many distant homes.

The individualistic traits have been well illustrated in the paintings and drawings of the *Patuas* (painters) of Bengal and Rajputana and also in the embroidery works of the womenfolk. The vital power of Indian folk artists is perhaps best shown in figurines of mother and child. In these the mother expresses herself in the most universal manner. The feet, thighs, and belly give power and elasticity to both the standing and sitting mothers as each, with primordial tenderness, embraces her clinging offspring. There is a total disregard of accuracy in anatomical detail, but in each case the mother is warm and full of life, possessing a natural, quiet distinction, an aloof pride of fulfilment.

It is not easy to find a satisfactory interpretation of

the meaning of motifs found in different art objects, as the same motif may be interpreted in different ways, and the same idea may be embodied in different forms. The symbolic content of the design may not always be obvious to the artist and often the meaning does not emerge at once. Objects or drawings, although meaningless in one place, may have a different meaning in a different place. There is no difference between the "ageless types" of figurines, human or animal, whether they are worshipped or played with. Objects like mother and child, horses and earthenware pots are used as toys by the children, and once they are consecrated they become religious objects. Similarly, an *Alipana* drawing when done by women on festive occasions in execution of certain vows is full of sacred significance, but when drawn on a wooden seat for the use of bride and bridegroom is without any significance. It is a *pièce d'occasion*. The motive may or may not necessarily be symbolic, or the result of a religious impulse.

Some forms and motifs of Indian folk art bear a close resemblance to those of the ancient arts of Western Asia and the Mediterranean civilization. Technically and even artistically there are very strong reasons for claiming a direct relationship of the Indus valley civilization of the fifth millennium B.C., and perhaps that of the Mesopotamian civilization, with many nude figurines found widely in Indian folk art.

THE MUSIC OF INDIA

By K. E. NARAYANA MENON

INDIAN MUSIC IS a very ancient and sophisticated art, and long before the Christian era had developed not only definite laws of theory and practice, but even a somewhat comprehensive theory of appreciation. Ancient Hindu texts describe music as a type of activity, a statement governed by a *rasa*. *Rasa* means flavour, that which gives character to a work of art and determines its quality. They enumerate nine of these *rasas*—*Sringāra* (love), *Vīra* (heroism), *Bībhatsa* (disgust), *Raudra* (anger), *Hāsyā* (mirth), *Bhayānka* (terror), *Karuna* (pity), *Adbhuta* (wonder), and *Sānta* (tranquillity). They make an important distinction between primary (*sthāyini*) *rasas*, the ones given above, and transient or subordinate (*vyabhichārini*) *rasas* like joy, impatience. The ancient pandits studied carefully the physical stimulants to æsthetic enjoyment. They analysed the nature of emotion (*Bhāva*); the conditions and the themes which produce the emotions (*Vibhāva*); the visible signs and results of such emotion (*Anubhāva*); and even the nature of the sub-conscious mind, the involuntary emotions (*Sattvabhāva*). Their methods were rational and, what is more, they put their conclusions to good practical use. The Greeks did this on a much smaller scale. They realized, for instance, that the Doric mode was dignified and manly, and taught the Spartan boys nothing else. They were careful of the use of the Lydian mode which they thought voluptuous, licentious, and orgiastic. Strabo, the Greek geographer, must have been thinking of this when he acknowledged the debt of Greek music to India.

In the highest Hindu conception of art, religion and art are synonymous. This would be in accordance with the rationale of a hieratic society. Music is an instrument in the realization of God. A song, like an image, is a *yantra* (apparatus) to achieve identical consciousness in worshipper and deity. There is a well-known saying that the deity can be worshipped only in so far as the worshipper becomes the deity. *Samādhi* expresses the worshipper's identification with the deity as well as the artist's identification with the subject. *Sādhana* expresses the fruition of both. Some of the texts were very explicit and went so far as to say: "By clearly expressing the *rasa*, and enabling men to taste thereof, it gives them the wisdom of Brahma, whereby they may understand how every business is unstable; from which indifference to such business, and therefrom, arise the highest virtues of peace and patience and thence again may be won the bliss of Brahma."

Such a serious concept of art would imply theories and standards of criticism and appreciation equally sophisticated. Æsthetic experience is left to the *Rasika*, the spectator, the listener. The musician simply creates the conditions. This would mean that passive listening is almost impossible. Keeping time, often quite ostentatiously, at Indian concerts is not considered bad etiquette. The spectacle of a silent immobile audience holding its breath until the last phrase to applaud a fine performance is unknown in India where the most cultivated part of the audience often punctuates improvisations with nods of assent and little eulogistic phrases. *Rasāswādhana*, the tasting of *rasa*, the appreciation of art, depends on the cultivated sensibility of the

listener. Dhananjaya, an early medieval critic in his *Dasarûpa* says quite definitely: "The *rasika*'s own capacity to be delighted is the most important thing."

These theories would point to a society, which, in spite of its feudal character was aware of the living relation of art to life. It must be remembered that in this society the caste system was a comparatively progressive force. But as the castes became more rigid, and society became more or less static, we notice vicious tendencies creeping into music. The golden age can be fixed at the fifth to the twelfth centuries. After that we come across musicians saying: "Only that which accords with the canons is beautiful in the eyes of the discerning, not that which pleases individual fancy." This implies a negation of the living relation of art to life. From now on music will have to be created, appreciated, and criticized in its own terms. Dangerous theories of "formalism" begin to appear. The ossification of the leisured class who alone had the cultural background necessary for critical appreciation develops preciosity. The only things which such conditions perhaps favoured was the development of technique.

The coming of the Mohammedans led to interesting developments in the North. The Mohammedans brought with them a very subtle art. The Persians had, by the tenth century, developed a singularly complete melodic scale. Their sense of the tonic was a bit uncertain perhaps, but they already had absolutely true fifths and fourths, as well as a major third and sixth. Also, they were first rate theoreticians. Their impact on Indian music had strange effects. Indian music assimilated the new forces and theories. A delicate Mohammedan superstructure with fine curves was given to the robust

body of Hindu music. The South, untouched by the influence of Islam, kept up and developed the older and more traditional style. It preserved its purely hieratic character and concerned itself with experiences as interpreted by religion. The introduction of a temporal element might have changed the nature of its development. Even a great development of instrumental music might have changed its course. But neither of these happened. And the static society did not provide the conditions for the development of such things as harmony. So music developed along purely melodic lines, and as the purely melodic element is a capacity of the human voice, the sung music became the highest form of music and the singer the greatest musician.

This would strike a European as very strange. In Europe the singer is, of all musicians, the least musical. That is because he is mainly a vehicle. His voice is trained to be rich in harmonics (in India the singer aims to achieve a purely "white" tone), and in chorus and part-singing, and to some extent, even in opera, he is used by the composer as just another instrument at his side. This is impossible in Indian music where the singer is the centre, the figurehead of the musical idea. The highest art is extemporaneous and every musician is a creative artist. This subjectivism has been inherent in the art for hundreds of years. It led to the development of a melodic system, perhaps the purest and most complete in existence to-day. If Europeans find it difficult to adjust themselves to it, it is not because it has no feeling for the tonic. A Carnatic *rāga* like *Kyṛavāṇi* is almost exactly the same as the European harmonic minor scale. Others like *Tānarūpi* or *Gavāmbōdi* which appear distant from the diatonic scale

never lose sight of the *amsha*, the tonic. With the development of harmony, Europe lost the ear for pure melody. I mean by pure melody a melody that neither needs nor implies harmony. Harmony affects the structure of melody itself, and it has become almost impossible for the European to conceive of melody without the implications, tacit or explicit, of a harmonic system. In European music a melodic line is really the top or the surface line of a carefully constructed harmonic structure. Thus in the building up of melody, the harmonic implications of substantive and passing notes, and the relationship of these play an important part. Also, European melody has a tendency to develop round notes which are harmonically related to the tonic. All this implies a kind of plastic relationship between the notes. Indian melody is made up of notes which are related purely by their continuity. It is refractory to laws which govern Western melody. Thus the contrast between the major and the minor scale used so effectively in Western music would be meaningless in Indian music unless it is emphasized and graduated by subtle shades of intonation non-existent in European music. The use of quarter tones and of even smaller divisions is significant here. Modern European music, particularly in the hands of Haba and Bloch, has attempted the use of such intervals with, to my ears, rather unsatisfactory results. On the other hand, Tovey has said that the just intonation of a Wagner opera would need some 1,000 notes, which means that the ear can appreciate even much smaller measurements. It is not the number of notes that we use that is important. The important thing is how small an interval is of direct use and interest to us. Haba's string quartets and the only quintet of

Bloch that I have heard sound like just faulty intonation.¹ Indian music is aware of the exact value of these small measurements and makes full use of them.

There is no absolute pitch in Indian music. This is, of course, because it does not concern itself with harmonic draughtsmanship, and, consequently, does not need such a stable standard. The melody usually centres round the tetrachord, often within it, and swings on two marked pivots—the tonic and the fourth or the fifth. This would suggest a harmonic potentiality, if not a latent harmonic sense. The *rāga* (mode) is the basis of melody. There are seventy-two fully septatonic *rāgas*, the *sampurnas* or *melakartas* as they are called. In all these the fifth is constant; thirty-six have true fourths, thirty-six sharp fourths. This represents the maximum possibilities of a comparatively modern system of classification. There are several derivative *rāgas*, some pentatonic, some sextatonic. About four hundred of these are classified and more or less in actual use. Accidental notes are rare, but where used, they are an integral part of the *rāga*.

Rhythm is assymetric as well as symmetric. Often a bar is made up of $4 + 2 + 2$, the Carnatic *Ādi Tāla*. Variations of time (*tāla*) do not proceed in geometric progression. A variation of the time measure given above will be $5 + 2 + 2$ or $3 + 2 + 2$. There are accented and unaccented parts of a bar. Thus in the *ādi tāla* of eight bars, the first, fifth, and seventh are strongly accented. All these permutations and combinations are possible in Indian music, because, again, it is

¹ When I was new to European music I have often wondered listening to a 'cellist playing slightly out of tune whether it was deliberate accentuation and had any particular significance.

not forced to accept symmetries of rhythm which harmonic planning necessitates.

The South and the North agree on fundamentals though the nomenclature both of *rāgas* and *tālas* differs. The difference between the north and the south to-day is a difference mainly of style. Instrumental music is more developed in the north. The north has also brought into the main current a temporal element which has had a healthy effect. In the south even to-day the leading composers are pre-occupied with the writing of mystical religious songs. They faithfully copy the standards set by the great Thyagaraja, an early nineteenth century composer, in form as well as content. Thyagaraja was a great poet as well as a musician and he could transmute the simplicity of belief and the ecstasy of a prayer granted into a poetic and musical idiom closest to those feelings. He was a God-fearing, saintly man, and in his day his devotion expressed to some extent a collective emotion. To-day the disruption of the old social unit as well as the rude shocks which "religion" has suffered make these composers look like relics of an outmoded faith. I am not well acquainted with contemporary tendencies in the north. But unorthodox developments in film music and the growth of "orchestras" which spring up like mushrooms everywhere, at street corners as well as Maharajas' French palaces, make the orthodox pandits fall back upon theories of formalism and emotionism.

Europe seems to be of late acquiring a sense of values in the understanding and appreciation of Eastern art. Exhibitions of Eastern Art have been successful and popular. Indian and Javanese dance recitals have attracted much attention. This would suggest that the

West can set aside argument, reason, and intellect and accept intuition, speculation, and transcendentalism when necessary. At least, within limits. But the language of music is determined by tradition and convention. Europe and India have nursed and developed their musical traditions under such different circumstances, formative influences, social and political upheavals that they have little in common to-day. The Arts have their ecology. The written word in literature, the movements and gestures in the Dance, the lines in painting are all closely associated with national temperaments which are in their turn mainly determined by geographical, social, and economic conditions. And just as India developed a literature, predominantly lyrical, a Dance with a maximum of local gestural articulation and a painting which is mainly two-dimensional, so she developed a purely melodic music. Europe needed such tremendous upheavals as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution to objectify and democratize her Arts. Literature became a movement of energy, painting acquired perspective, and music developed tonality only comparatively recently. The social and political upheavals taking place in India to-day have brought in its train a great renaissance of music and the arts. A complete re-orientation in social outlook would vitally affect the structure of music. A revolution in technique is inevitable. Music will come down to earth, and come down with a bang. It would be interesting to speculate how long it would take India to develop what took Europe nearly a thousand years.

A PAIR OF MOUSTACHIOS

A TALE

By MULK RAJ ANAND

THERE ARE VARIOUS kinds of moustachios worn in my country to mark off the boundaries between the various classes of people. Outsiders may think it stupid to lay down, or rather to raise, lines of demarcation of this kind, but we are notorious in the whole world for sticking to our queer old conventions, prides and prejudices, even as the Chinese or the Americans, or, for that matter, the English . . . And, at any rate, some people may think it easier and more convenient to wear permanent boundary-lines like moustachios, which only need a smear of grease to keep them bright and shiny, rather than to wear frock coats, striped trousers and top hats which constantly need to be laundered and dry-cleaned and the maintenance of which is already leading to the bankruptcy of the European ruling classes. So we prefer the various styles of moustachios to mark out the differences between the classes . . .

And very unique and poetical symbols they are too. For instance, there is the famous lion moustache, the fearsome upstanding symbol of that great order of resplendent Rajas, Maharajas, Nabobs, and English army generals who are so well known for their devotion to the King-Emperor. Then there is the tiger moustache, the uncanny, several pointed moustache worn by the unbending, unchanging survivals from the ranks of the feudal gentry who have nothing left but their pride in their greatness and a few mementos of past glory, scrolls of honour and "sanads" granted by the former Emperors,

a few gold trinkets, heirlooms and bits of land. Next there is the goat moustache, a rather unsure brand, worn by the nouveaux riche, the new commercial bourgeoisie and the shopkeeper class who somehow don't belong, an indifferent, thin little line of a moustache worn so that its tips can be turned up or down as the occasion demands a show of power to some coolie or humility and meekness to a more dignified or prosperous client. There is the Charlie Chaplin moustache worn by the lower middle class, by clerks and professional men, a kind of half-and-half affair, deliberately designed as a compromise between the traditional full moustache and the clean-shaven Curzon cut of the Sahibs and the Barristers, because the Babus are not sure whether the Sahibs like them to keep moustachios or not. There is the sheep moustache of the coolies and the lower orders, the moustache of the peasants, and so on. In fact, there are endless styles of moustachios, all appropriate to the wearers and significant of the various orders, as rigorously adhered to as if they had all been patented by the Government of India or had been sanctioned by special appointment with His Majesty the King or Her Majesty the Queen. And any poaching on the style of one class by members of another is resented, and the rising ratio of murders in my country is interpreted by certain authorities as being indicative of the increasing jealousy with which each class is guarding its rights and privileges in regard to the mark of the moustachio.

Of course, the prognostications of the statisticians are rather too abstract and not all the murders can be traced to this cause, but, certainly, it is true that the preferences of the people in regard to their moustachios are causing a lot of trouble in our parts.

For instance, there was a rumpus in my own village the other day about a pair of moustachios.

It so happened that Seth Ramanand, the grocer and moneylender, who has been doing well out of the recent fall in the prices of wheat by buying up whole crops cheap from the hard-pressed peasants and then selling grain at higher prices, took it into his head to twist the goat moustache, integral to his order and position in society, at the tips, so that it looked nearly like a tiger moustache.

Nobody seemed to mind very much, because most of the mouse-moustached peasants in our village are beholden to the banya, either because they owe him interest on a loan, or an instalment on a mortgage of jewellery or land. Besides, the Seth had been careful enough to twist his moustache so that it seemed nearly though not quite like a tiger moustache.

But there lives in the vicinity of our village, in an old, dilapidated Moghul style house, a Mussulman named Khan Azam Kahn, who claims descent from an ancient Afghan family whose heads were noblemen and councillors in the court of the Great Moghuls. Khan Azam Khan, a tall, middle-aged man, is a handsome and dignified person, and he wears a tiger moustache and remains adorned with the faded remnants of a gold brocaded waistcoat though he hasn't even a patch of land left.

Some people, notably the landlord of our village and the moneylender, maliciously say that he is an imposter, and that all his talk about his blue blood is merely the bluff of a rascal. Others, like the priest of the temple, concede that his ancestors were certainly attached to the court of the Great Moghuls, but as sweepers. The

landlord, the moneylender, and the priest are manifestly jealous of anyone's long heredity, however, because they have all risen from nothing, and it is obvious from the stately ruins around Khan Azam Khan, what grace was once his and his forefather's. Only Khan Azam Khan's pride is greatly in excess of his present possessions and he is inordinately jealous of his old privileges and rather foolish and headstrong in safeguarding every sacred brick of his tottering house against vandalism.

Khan Azam Khan happened to go to the moneylender's shop to pawn his wife's gold nose-ring one morning, and he noticed the upturning tendency of the hair on Ramanand's upper lip which made the banya's goat moustache look almost like his own tiger moustache.

"Since when have the lentil-eating shopkeepers become noblemen?" he asked surlily even before he had shown the nose-ring to the banya.

"I don't know what you mean, Khan," Ramanand answered.

"You know what I mean, seed of a donkey!" said the Khan. "Look at the way you have turned the tips of your moustache upwards. It almost looks like my tiger-moustache. Turn the tips down to the style proper to the goat that you are! Fancy the airs of the banyas nowadays!"

"Oh Khan, don't get so excited," said the moneylender who was nothing if he was not amenable, having built up his business on the maxim that the customer is always right.

"I tell you, turn the tip of your moustache down if you value your life!" raged Khan Azam Khan.

"If that is all the trouble, here you are," said Ramanand, brushing one end of his moustache with his oily

hand, so that it dropped like a dead fly. "Come, show me the trinkets—how much do you want for them?"

Now that Khan Azam Khan's pride was appeased, he was like soft wax in the merchant's sure hand. His need, and the need of his family, for food, was great, and he humbly accepted the value which the banya put on them as a pawn.

But as he was departing, after negotiating his business, he noticed that though one end of the banya's moustache had come down at his behest, the other end was still up.

"A strange trick you have played on me, you swine!" the Khan said.

"I have paid you the best value for your trinket, Khan, that any moneylender will pay in these parts," the banya said. "Specially in these days when the sarkars of the whole world are fighting each other..."

"It has nothing to do with the trinket," said Azam Khan. "But one end of your moustache is still up like my tiger moustache though you have brought down the other to your proper goat's style. Bring that other end down also, so that there is no aping by your moustache of mine."

"Now, Khan," said the banya, "I humbled myself because you are doing business with me. You can't expect me to become a mere worm just because you have pawned a trinket with me. If you were pledging some more expensive jewellery I might consider obliging you a little more. Anyhow, my humble milk skimmer doesn't look a bit like your valiant tiger moustache."

"Bring that tip down!" Khan Azam Khan roared, for the more he had looked at the banya's moustache the more the still upturned tip seemed to him like an effort at an imitation of his own.

"Now, be sensible, Khan," the moneylender said, waving his hand with an imperturbable calm.

"I tell you, turn that tip down or I shall wring your neck," said the Khan.

"All right, the next time you come to do business with me, I shall bring that tip down," answered the moneylender cunningly.

"That is fair," said Chaudhri Chottu Ram, the landlord of the village, who was sitting under the tree opposite.

"To be sure ! To be sure !" some peasants chimed in sheepishly.

Khan Azam Khan managed to control his murderous impulses, and walked away. But he could not quell his pride, the pride of the generations of his ancestors who had worn the tiger moustache as a mark of their high position. To see the symbol of his exalted order imitated by a banya—this was too much for him. He went home and fetched a necklace which had come down to his family through seven generations and, placing it before the banya, said :

"Now will you bring that tip of your moustache down ?"

"By all means, Khan," said the banya. "But let us see about this necklace. How much do you want for it ?"

"Any price would do, so long as you bring the tip of your moustache down," answered Azam Khan.

After they had settled the business, the moneylender said, "Now, Khan, I shall carry out your will." And he ceremoniously brushed the upturned tip of his moustache down.

As Khan Azam Khan was walking away, however, he noticed that the other tip of the banya's moustache had

now gone up and stood, dubiously like the upturned end of his own exalted tiger moustache. He turned on his feet and shouted :

"I shall kill you if you don't brush that moustache into the shape appropriate to your position as a lentil-eating banya !"

"Now, now, Khan, come to your senses, you know it is only the illusion of a tiger moustache and nowhere like your brave and wonderful adornment," said the greasy moneylender.

"I tell you I won't have you insulting the insignia of my order !" shouted Azam Khan. "You bring that tip down."

"I wouldn't do it Khan, even if you pawned all the jewellery you possess to me," said the moneylender, stiffening.

"I would rather I lost all my remaining worldly possessions, my pots and pans, my clothes, even my house, than see the tip of your moustache turned up like that !" spluttered Azam Khan.

"Acha, if you care so little for all your goods and chattels you sell them to me and then I shall turn that tip of my moustache down," said the moneylender. "And, what is more, I shall keep it flat. Now is that a bargain?"

"That seems fair enough," said the landlord from under the tree where he was preparing for a siesta.

"But what proof have I that you will keep your word," said Azam Khan. "You oily lentil-eaters never keep your promises."

"We shall draw a deed, here and now," said the moneylender. "And we shall have it signed by the elders of the village who are seated under that tree. What more do you want?"

"Now, there is no catch in that," put in the landlord. "I and these other elders will come to court as witnesses on your behalf if the banya doesn't keep his moustache to the goat style ever afterwards."

"I shall excommunicate him from religion if he doesn't keep his word," added the priest, who had arrived on the scene on hearing the hubbub.

"Acha," agreed Azam Khan.

And he forthwith had a deed prepared by the petition writer of the village who sat smoking his hubble-bubble under the tree. And this document, transferring all his household goods and chattels, was signed in the presence of the elders of the village and sealed. And the money-lender forthwith brought both tips of his moustache down and kept them glued in the goat style appropriate to his order, while Khan Azam Khan gave a special twist to his tiger moustache and walked away, proud that he had maintained the valiant uprightness of the symbol of his old and noble order even though he had become a pauper . . .

THE LOCUSTS

By S. RAJA RATNAM

ONE NIGHT THERE is a dull roar in the heavens as of a demon seized with an agonizing gripe. There is a rumble to the east, which moves slowly to the low-lying wooded hills to the west, screaming its fury as it passes over the huts and houses huddled in the darkness below. The trees bend and lift their shivering branches upwards, their leaves hissing and their roots struggling to hold on to the soil. Flashes of lightning dart like swallows in the sky.

Until now the village had feared a drought. The men had scanned the sky and seen only wisps of clouds wandering like lost souls. The countryside had been browned and blistered; the mango-blossoms, which flowered like stars, had withered. Because of this dread in their hearts people had quarrelled over trifles. Nadasen, the potter, had so beaten his wife that she had run screaming to take refuge in her mother's house. Subbrayan, the barber, armed with a razor, had laid siege to Kumarapa's house, because the latter's wife had squirted *pan* juice into his pumpkin patch.

Now that the rain has come a new mood comes over the village. Nadasen's wife is running in the rain back to her husband. She laughs. Subbrayan folds his razor and says with a sigh, "Ah, what's the use of slitting the rogue's throat now. The rain will wash away the *pan* juice from my pumpkins."

In his shop Thulasi sits and listens to the rain and smiles. Yes, yes, everything will be different in the village now. There will be work to do to-morrow. The fierce patter

above reminds him of a leak in his thatched roof. "Ay, woman!" he calls out to his wife, "A bucket, quick! No. No. The biggest one you can find." He limps away with the bucket, for one of his legs is crippled. He returns, lies down on his straw mat, and thinks that it was about time he had his roof thatched.

The drip, drip, drip, drip of the rain into the bucket soon puts him to sleep.

The next morning Thulasi wakes up to find his wife complaining that the bucket has overflowed and made a mess of the dung floor. Outside he finds that the sun is already out, and has given the wet leaves and grass a rich sparkle. The air is full of the exciting smells of the flowers and the earth. Even his crippled feet feels a strange tremor.

The women folk are already washing at the well; the children jumping into puddles and screaming their lungs out. Annamal, the milkmaid, passes by with an earthen vessel balanced on her head. She holds herself erect and plants each foot slowly but firmly forward. The graceful swing of her broad hips makes him wish he were young again.

"Ah, my sweet Annamal," he says with mock gallantry, "How beautiful you have grown this morning! Will not the wedding drums beat for you this season? Even Uncle Thulasi's heart has succumbed to your charms."

Annamal is seized with embarrassment that she nearly drops her vessel of milk.

"Let me be, Uncle Thulasi," she says, "I nearly spilt my milk."

Then she walks away with the grace of a goddess, thinking of Surian whose match-maker had already

talked matters over with her father. After the harvest the wedding drums will throb for her.

Thulasi chuckled after her. Everything about him was so full of new life and sounds that his heart could not contain the ecstasy he felt.

"Where does all this happiness come from?" he said to himself. "Yesterday and the day before and before that there was bitterness and sorrow. To-day there is so much of joy that I want to sing and dance like that crazy cow-herd Vellan. Yes, where does it all come from?"

"From the heart," he told himself.

"From the richness of the earth," he said as he neared the fields.

Before him stretched a sheet of white, scintillating water, broken only by the dark mud-dykes which separated one field from the other. Far away the hills were tinted blue, and overhead the clouds, light as milk foams, tumbled and spread in the sky.

Men were already at work. The warm water came up to their knees, and they were splattered with mud. They struggled with the wooden ploughs as pairs of bullocks went round and round. He saw the men, small and dark against the vast sheet of water, sky, and shining mud, moving like so many silent, lonely souls. One man halted his plough, looked up at the sky, and wiped the sweat wearily off his brow. Here and there men scattered their seeds from baskets as they struggled through the mud.

A nostalgia seized him. Ah, if he only had a land of his own to plough, and sow, and reap! Once he had worked on his father's land, but his father had to sell it to pay his debts. With the little that was left over of the

money Thulasi's father had opened the shop which, after his father's death, he now ran. In his shop he sold dal and salt ; ghee and oil. He even had tinned stuffs which had come from far-off lands, but since not very many of the farmers could afford to buy them he kept them as decoration, taking care to blow the dust off them. Some of the tinned foods had even gone bad. Once the washerman's wife had bought a tin of fruits for her son and complained that the boy had convulsions. He sold clothes too ; most of them cheap foreign materials which the farmers bought. The native kadhar was too expensive for the villagers, but he was proud of his kadhar stock which, too, collected dust with his tinned goods.

"Expensive ?" he said. "But think of it, brother ! It's real kadhar. Made in our own country, in our own mills, by our own people. You wait, brother, and see if one day the Europeans will not buy their clothes from *us*."

But now as he looked at the fields and smelt the earth he could not forget that he was still a farmer.

"The earth is rich, and when men sweat it will pour its riches into their laps," he said, as he walked back to his shop, already crowded with women who were sure that the harvest would be good this year.

Within a few weeks there was a splendid harvest. The whole countryside was ablaze with yellow streaks of fire. When the wind ruffled the cornfields there was a pleasant hum in the air.

"Ay Nessapa !" called out Thulasi one morning. "I hear you are harvesting to-day."

"Yes. Can you not hear them ? They are singing already."

"It will be hard work, eh ?"

“Hard and very hot,” said Nessapa, one of the best reapers.

When Thulasi limped towards the fields he heard the children, caught in a wild impulse, run shrieking through the yellow mass of corn.

Knives and scythes flashed in the sun.

“O, hum, hum,” breathed the men. Everyone was astir. “O, hum, hum.”

The corn-stalks fell. The women followed and tied them up in sheaves. Behind them the ground was a brown stubble. The hours passed.

Thulasi heard someone shout. Men collected together, and there was a loud commotion.

“Oi, brothers,” he called out as he limped towards the men, “What is it? Has the sky fallen down?”

The men did not laugh. One of the men held a large, reddish insect between his fingers. It was evil looking, with sharp greedy mouth, and furry legs. It struggled, kicking its legs, and moving its hungry jaws. Overhead the birds were already after the few of the stray locusts that flew about. Far away over the hills was a dark, apparently unmoving haze.

“So!” he thought, “Was all the toil for this?”

He was thinking of the acres and acres of unreaped fields. He looked at the drawn, tired faces of the men, helpless before the merciless invader, and a vast aching filled his heart.

The man crushed the red insect between his fingers and threw it away. The men set to work feverishly to save what little of the crops they could.

The dark haze over the hills grew and spread. There was no more singing in the fields.

By next afternoon there was a drone. Louder and

louder. Nearer and nearer. Women began to wail. Old men muttered prayers between their long, white beards. The reapers stared silently at the vast tracks of ungathered corn.

"What shall we do? What shall we do?" cried the women.

"We shall starve. Who will feed the little ones?"

"Mercy, O God! Mercy! Mercy for Your wearied children."

There *was* mercy. For the locusts cast their shadow over the fields and passed without alighting on their crops. When the drone had died away the people whooped with joy.

Thulasi laughed and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. It was as if his own crops had been saved. He was happy, happy for his comrades. Now there would be plenty for the hungry, wearied people.

"God has been merciful," he said as he walked back to his shop. "The earth has been merciful. Yes, even the locusts have been merciful."

He was so happy he did not hear Naga Mudaliar call out to him.

"O forgive me, Mudaliar," he apologized, "I was so engrossed I did not hear you. The locusts might have ruined these poor people."

"The locusts might have ruined me, too," said Naga Mudaliar, who owned most of the lands in the village, and was greedy for yet more. "Shiva be praised for that! Otherwise these rogues would have cheated me out of my dues. . . . What is the matter with you? There is a strange look on your face."

The happiness went out of Thulasi's heart. He was

suddenly thinking of Sangran, the moneylender, and of the tax-collector, of the Brahmin priest . . .

“ Nothing, Mudaliar,” said Thulasi. “ I was thinking of one of the locusts a farmer crushed between his fingers yesterday. He crushed it and threw it away.”

“ What are you talking about ? ”

“ Forgive me, Mudaliar. I was just wondering.”

WHAT HAS TO BE

By S. RAJA RATNAM

SHE ENTERED THROUGH the yawning mouth of the hut and stood wiping her hands on her cotton skirt, regarding first the flickering oil-lamp which stood in a smoke-blackened niche in the dung wall, and then at her husband. He sat on the floor, his face buried between his hunched-up knees and his broad, smooth back against the battered, heavy wooden chest. There was a smell of sweat, smoke, and soiled linen.

She stood there saying nothing, but watching her husband who was apparently unaware of her presence. He seemed like a man in a deep sleep. Then she moved towards the far end of the hut and unrolling the mat, prepared the bed.

Her face was bloodless, the skin transparent, and her movements had a wearied, lifeless quality about them. Her hands, especially, were so thin that they looked like dry twigs. Only in her black sombre eyes was there a suggestion of that other strength which came from within.

She lay upon the mat without undressing, but could not sleep. Her eyes were fixed on her husband, who still sat there quiet, and hugging his knees.

“ Husband ! ” she whispered, “ are you asleep ? ”

She had to call out a few times before he raised his head. He looked about him dazed, as if he had not completely recovered a grip of his surroundings. Even in the half shadow she could see the dull, glazed film over his eyes.

“ Umm ! ” he mumbled, looking about him.

“ The bed is ready.”

He rubbed his face. It was a lean, young face, neither stupid nor intelligent, nor particularly brutal. The hands were strong and square, with the nails black and broken.

"It's very late," she said.

"Is it, Leela?" he mumbled, without looking at her. "Don't wait up for me, please. You go to sleep. I'll come in later."

"But you were asleep when I called out to you. Why don't you come to bed now instead of sitting there? You look tired."

"I'm not sleepy really. I'll sit up for a while. You put out the light and go to sleep, Leela."

Leela sat up and pushed back the coarse, red blankets.

"What is it, my husband? What is ailing you?"

"It's nothing," he said wearily. "There is nothing the matter with me. I don't feel like sleep at the moment, that's all." He smiled feebly to reassure her.

"But there is something the matter," she cried, moving towards him. "I know that you are worried about something. You have been sitting like this the whole evening, and the night before and the night before that. I can't get to sleep wondering why! I thought it was some passing mood, but you seem to be getting deeper and deeper into it. Won't you trust me and tell me? Please!"

She was almost in tears. She leant against him.

"But telling you won't make any difference. Perhaps it will only make things worse. Especially now that you are with child, it will be better if you don't know."

His arm which she gripped was without life.

"But don't you trust me enough?" she pleaded. "Have you not told me your troubles before—troubles

which were not easy to bear? When we lost our land it was a terrible blow, but it was easier for you when you told me. Won't you trust me and tell me now?"

He stared at her, his eyes suddenly becoming bright and hard.

"Yes, Leela," he said slowly, his voice an even flow. "Yes, I can trust you... You remember our first baby..."

"It is not that baby you are worried about!" said Leela. "Why, it was not even ten months old when it died! But that was six months ago. You are not still grieving for the child?"

She looked at his face, wondering whether he was telling a tale just because she had pestered him. The child had been a sickly thing with wheezy lungs. He had not even the strength when her cousin Meenachi, because Leela's breasts could not feed him, had cajoled the child to take to her own breasts. Her husband, too, had been disappointed in the shrivelled tiny creature, but had done everything he could for his son. The child had, however, grown worse and worse till one day it died. She never fully understood why the merciful death of the child should have affected her husband so much. It was some weeks before he could forget about the child.

"Is it the child you are worrying about?" she asked again. He sat erect and rigid, staring straight ahead at the struggling shadows on the wall.

"You remember how happy I was when you told me that I was going to be a father," he said, slowly. "I was like a schoolboy expecting a promised gift and making plans what he would do when he got it. You grew weak and sickly carrying the baby, but I was too happy to notice that. Even when I heard you cry in labour I was

waiting impatiently for the howls of the baby and praying, God make it a boy. A lusty, strong boy . . . Then the midwife handed a tiny shrivelled thing instead, which whined like a sick dog. O Leela, how I hated the tiny thing right from the very start ! I could not bring myself to hold it even. Holding it I felt the smell of death which hung over it. . .

“ When I thought perhaps if I took it to the dispensary the doctor sahib could do something for it. Perhaps it could grow strong with the doctor’s medicine. You know what the doctor sahib said ? He said, ‘ There is no medicine to cure this child. It was born ill.’ That’s what the doctor sahib said.

“ You know the rest. Yes, it was a sickly baby and grew uglier and uglier every day. When I saw the sores come up on the poor mite’s body and heard it trying to breathe, I wondered why it was born in the first place. Every time I looked into the mite’s eyes I could see so much of pain and misery that I had to look away. You know, Leela, sometimes I wanted to put the child out of its misery. Many times I had my fingers curled round the tiny throat and thought that I had only to squeeze once and all would have been over in a moment. Only I had not the courage. But I swear, had the child lived longer I would have killed it. I knew that every day the child lived it would become harder for me to bear its growing misery. You don’t know what a relief it was when the poor thing died.”

He paused to wipe his face with the back of his hand. There was a film of perspiration on his forehead.

“ God forgive me that I should talk like this,” he continued. “ Sometimes I wonder if I have a stone for a heart ! The day when I saw my own child dead the

tears in my eyes were of joy and thanks. I tried so hard to love the child, but all I could give was pity. From the time it was born till the day it died I suffered with the child."

She put her arms around his shoulders.

"My poor, poor husband," she said softly. "Did I not know how you felt? Everything you went through I had also gone through. If it had pleased God to give us such a child it is not for us to question the ways of the Creator. What has to be will be! But what good will it do to think about the child now? It lived and it died, and no amount of brooding will change the past. Besides this . . . this other child which is to come soon, it will be as you want it."

She heard him grind his teeth, and the expression on his face terrified her.

"It is not the *dead* child that has tormented me these last few days," he cried. "Don't you understand, Leela? Don't you understand why our child died? The doctor said that it was ill *before* it was born."

She did not comprehend him at first, until she saw his rigid accusing stare. Suddenly she was conscious of the sick emaciated body of hers, and of the child struggling to live within.

She groped her way towards the mat, aware of a looming dread for her unborn child.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

STREET SONGS. EDITH SITWELL. Macmillan 3s. 6d. WAR IS DESTRUCTIVE not of cities only but of the mind ; development is checked, memory hurts ; it is only occasionally that an artist is able to fuse a present that seems unending with the eternal that is so hard for us to recall. When this happens we are invulnerable for a moment. Are we ever sufficiently grateful ? Edith Sitwell has given us such a possibility in her *Street Songs*, one of the major events in modern English literary history.

Great movements, revolutionary and otherwise, have been heralded and sometimes made by artists rather than politicians. It was not a soldier who began our present world, it was a scholar, Diderot, with his *Encyclopaedia*. People tend to confuse poetry with the light lyrics tossed into a summer spectacle. They forget that it exercises a power beyond the conception of its creator. The obvious example is the effect that the name Byron still has in Greece.

A stupid fashion has been current recently which, seeking to take this inherent force from art, would have it expressed in an obvious and primitive language of word or line, so that all, they say, may understand it. A strange, false reasoning for, though we desire no barriers, we do not ask our pilots to fly trainers because the complicated instrument board of a bomber is beyond our control nor do we suggest that the doctor should attend the sick with medieval herbs because his patients do not comprehend modern chemistry. It is an insult to the people to ask of the artist less than the very highest technical development of which he is capable, whether an audience watch a play or a fighter plane, to share the achievement demands, not passivity, but intelligence.

Any of us can sit down and write, "I was in a raid yesterday, it was awful. I never thought I was going to come out alive." Our friends will agree, will say, "I'm so glad I heard from X" but the picture they will form will depend upon common experience. Later on, if the letter escapes the salvage collector, a child may re-read it, and wonder what Grandfather really felt when the bombs were dropping about him. It is different when an artist takes such a moment and says—

Still falls the rain
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss—
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails
Upon the Cross.

Suddenly not one but many hundreds of us can see the night of desolation that is not the Raid only, but the whole War, and we know that for one moment the last word has been said, that a poet's victory is our own victory, as we come up from cellars and from shelters into morning.

The terrifying characteristic of the past twenty years has been apathy. People were afraid of hatred as they were afraid of love. They dodged the implications of the Saar and Spain, they hurried to surrender their liberties. There was much surface talk about peace and fellowship, but they were unwilling to risk a blow or take a step in the service of their belief. Security became a god, they clamoured for decision to be taken from them, even the rebels seemed to want not a new empire but a garden city replica of some nursery playground. It was the same all over Europe. There was a universal terror of direct emotion, passion was so alarming to them that they did not recognize it if by chance they met it.

It is passion and we welcome it back to literature, that

is the dominant feature of Miss Sitwell's book. She is faithful to freedom and truth, not from habit, but because they are life to her. Her vision is the seer's : listen to her epitaph of a generation that, rather than feel, damped its emotions into an amiable but vacillating kindness :—

“ I weep for Venus whose body has changed to a metaphysical
city

Whose heart-beat is now the sound of the revolutions—for
love changed

To the hospital mercy, the scientists' hope for the future.

And for darkened Man, that complex multiplicity

Of air and water, plant and animal,

Hard diamond, infinite sun.”

It is not easy to take the profound causes of our present failure, our assumption that we could compel human nature into rapid change, and to assimilate these into lines that enlarge our imaginations as we read them. Most of us, if we look on History face to face, splutter with indignation or if we stay long enough, turn to a less terrifying mistress. The very vocabulary of *Lullaby* is of metal, there is the black, inevitable side of flying, the sense that mankind below is a tiny mark on some stark crater of the moon.

Some of us have asked for political poetry, Miss Sitwell has given it to us though we may not willingly recognize it because her concern is with Truth, with

“ Still one thing is left—the Bone ! ”

Until we are able to use our gifts constructively, we shall sentence ourselves to another Neanderthal time, we shall have to re-learn humbly the lessons of our centuries. Some of us have asked for comfort, and she brings us this, in lyrics among the loveliest written this past hundred years, *Song* and *The Youth with the Red-Gold*

Hair, that perfect fusion of English myth and English landscape with a remote, unselfish courage that became the badge of many, to their own surprise, during the raids.

Technique has never been used for its own ends, but what a mastery the poet has of rhythm, how subtly inevitable a rhyme is, how thought contracts, expands, until we hold, not a line, but an oracle. There is the obvious meaning and the one that only experience can teach us, when we are advanced enough to understand it. Nor is the ultimate verdict one of despair. In *An Old Woman* the poet states an approach to life and to the age in the terms of the highest philosophy.

Wise is the earth, consoling grief and glory,
The golden heroes proud as pomp of waves,—
Great is the earth embracing them, their graves,
And great is the earth's story.

Whatever the future is to be, as once before when the Armada threatened us, these dark and terrifying years have drawn from the eternal sources of our literature yet another major poet.

BRYHER

LISTEN MANGAN. EWART MILNE. Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles. 5s.

IN THIS, his third book, Mr. Milne is fighting a battle more on his own than in the earlier two. The reason for this is the increasing isolation of Ireland, due to her neutrality in the war. In his earlier books he was writing in a country at "peace", but he was deeply concerned with events in Europe and the world at large. He was in the same boat, almost, as his English contemporaries, as well as being able to keep more closely in touch with

their thought. Since then their circumstances have changed completely: his have not. There is nothing so difficult to recapture as yesterday's mood, especially when material forces co-operate to make it impossible.

Naturally, Mr. Milne is not really writing in the mood of an English "yesterday". The problems which face him as a political animal here in Ireland are so peculiar to the country as to put that quite out of the question. But much of the political poetry in his former volumes was in a line with that of England: that in the present book would probably be unintelligible to an English reader now. He has an attitude towards neutrality similar to that of the English poets towards "non-intervention", but his expression of it cannot mean much to an audience which gets its ideas about Irish neutrality from misinformed and malicious diatribes in the Sunday press. Mr. Milne's criticism comes from the inside (not only on the neutrality issue), and is consequently of very limited significance to the outside world.

But though the emphasis in this book is on politics and satire, there is enough "private poetry"—love-poetry and poetry which explores the reserves of symbolism which the poet shares (in both senses of the word) with the belligerent world, to make it worth attention. He has a poem called "For you, Ambrose Bierce", of which I quote the first two stanzas:

But was it snake, or sun, or myth
That drew him to the noonday height?
And was that horseman on the bluff
The shadow climbing of the night?

And were they hands or puma's claws
That tore her till he ground her pain

To powder on a sunset bridge
Red over river red: in vain?

There is an intensity here which he permits himself all too rarely: I use the word "permit" because I fancy he could do it more often than he does. Too often his poems are built around a single line, as in "Noel for Our Time" (published in *Penguin New Writing*), or around a thought or series of thoughts which never quite achieves the most memorable expression. He almost seems afraid that the close texture of a fully-realized poem will cut him off from the audience of ordinary people at whom he aims. That this kind of failure does not arise from mere incompetence is evident from the quality of his successes.

By the limitation which he sets himself, and by the ideas which rule his mind, Milne has put himself in a special category among the younger Irish poets. I think it likely that a great deal of what he is now doing will lose its value with the years, but this is not a consideration which would weigh much with anyone who writes with his objects. And in any case there is a sufficient residue of poetry less immediately conditioned by circumstance, to show an advance on his former books. Anybody who has been interested in his work in the past will find this volume satisfying, perhaps even a little satiating, for the total effect is rather one of over-copiousness. But that, after all, is itself part of his technique of approach, a sort of cumulative shock-tactics.

The production and printing make this book a pleasure to handle, especially while the dust-jacket is still intact, and at the price it is a remarkable achievement for 1942.

MAURICE JAMES CRAIG

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GREECE AGAINST THE AXIS. STANLEY CASSON.
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THIS BOOK IS a tragic record of one of the most tragic episodes of this war. The author had lived in Athens for many years and was attached to the British Military Mission in the autumn of 1940. The beginning describes in detail the Greek campaign against the Italians in Albania. There is an amusing story of Italian prisoners surrendering, shouting "beautiful Greece". Not quite so ridiculous as it appears, to those who know the landscape. Mr. Casson remarks upon the quickness with which Greek soldiers learned to use weapons of the most modern types and upon their tenacity and endurance.

The difficulties are not minimized. The Greeks were afraid to ask in time for full British aid lest it bring an invasion from Germany upon them. Here, however, the author seems to have forgotten previous history. Had Venizelos lived, he would never have listened to German promises for a moment. Part of the disaster has to be ascribed to the muddled policies of the pre-war years.

The second part of the book deals with the attempt of an exhausted Greek army and a small British force to hold back thousands of fresh German troops in the mountains. There are unforgettable pictures for Mr. Casson links geography, classical associations, and the present into a film that has all the stuff of an Attic tragedy in it. There was too much courage, too little mechanical equipment. Rearguards died, there were always too few planes. The last pages are so full of the unshatterable courage of unarmed Greek civilians that it is hardly bearable to read them. A book for the general public and for those interested in the campaign from the purely military point of view.

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## HITLER'S REICH AND CHURCHILL'S BRITAIN :

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN STEPHEN LAIRD AND  
WALTER GRAEBNER. Batsford. 6s.

MR. GRAEBNER AND Mr. Laird are both correspondents for the American magazine, *Time*. Mr. Graebner has represented it in London since 1937. Mr. Laird was sent to Berlin in November, 1940, left that city for America in June 1941 and was then sent to London in September. The book is a record of conversations between the two, taken down by Miss Dorothy Dennis.

Few people have the chance to visit both the capitals of two warring nations in one year. The first impression we have is of the absorbing interest of the volume; the second, how far can we trust the observations? Obviously we cannot check Mr. Laird on Berlin but we can appraise Mr. Graebner on England. The report appears impartial but with an eye for the audience. For instance, my personal experience has been that a mass movement of sympathy for Russia arose on that Sunday morning when a newsboy thrust a paper into my hand saying "We'll win now, Russia's with us" to the present crowded programmes of Russian films, music, and lectures and that this was not due to any Government wish, as Mr. Graebner implies, but to something deeply felt among all classes of the community. On the other hand, the English are deplorably ill-informed about the U.S.S.R., geographically, politically, and historically. Again I should not be as enthusiastic as Mr. Graebner about English censorship. It is not as harsh as in Germany and possibly despatches are not often cut, but is there enough news available to make them require deletion? Most of us now get our information rather from Hansard than the



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newspapers. Otherwise the observations are interesting and impartial.

Mr. Laird makes two important points. One is that Germans are paying far less in taxes than either English people or Americans. This does not bear out what I heard from Swiss friends in 1940, who had business dealings with Germany. The second, that the R.A.F. have done less damage than is said. If this be correct it is most important and we can only trust that the authorities here have interviewed Mr. Laird upon the subject. His other impressions cover familiar ground, the English are better fed and clothed, the Nazi party leaders are amassing huge fortunes, there will not be an internal break because the Germans are afraid of defeat. He sincerely detests the fascist regime but is it possible for anyone to live in the country without being affected by it, even if unconsciously? The damage our pilots have done is probably less than we hope but it is probably more than the Nazis were willing to let any correspondent know and they have more facilities than in a democracy for covering up losses.

This book will be provocative of many arguments and discussions.

LAMBERT STONE

#### PENGUIN HANSARD. 6d.

THE FOURTH VOLUME of the Penguin Hansard gives a useful survey, as its title suggests, of the second winter of the war. Serious citizens would do well to subscribe for the complete debates, issued by H.M. Stationery Office, for it is often in the shorter speeches that a real criticism of the war effort is to be found. This sixpenny, however, contains much of value for busy readers and

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for those who wish to keep a small book for reference beside them. Important questions are covered: early debates on women power, peace aims and production, matters connected with civil liberties, such as the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, the attitude of the B.B.C. to its staff, the Sunday opening of theatres. Incidentally, why does that last subject raise such an uproar in England? In Calvinistic Switzerland, far more religious in mind than we are here, the theatres open as a matter of course, and though theatres are shut in America almost everything else is open and the church membership is far greater than it is here. It appears to be an irrational tabu here, and the debate sounds like a savage tribe arguing about fishing rights. It must never be forgotten, however, that extracts and surveys, though valuable in their place, cannot make up for a study of the whole.

LAMBERT STONE

ENGLISH WOODLAND. JOHN RODGERS. Batsford.  
10s. 6d.

THIS VOLUME SETS out to be "the first comprehensive survey" of our woodlands. I turned at once for a reference to that friendly and encouraging "Book of the English Oak" which has been a favourite with so many since Charles Hurst set out on his journey to inspect our famous oaks and to plant acorns. It was disappointing to find no mention of it, or of Hurst. One at once suspected Mr. Rodgers's work and searched the index more carefully: no mention of Arthur Standish and his "Commons Complaint", nor of Augustine Henry's "Forests, Woods, and Trees" which deals so well with the effect of our woodlands on health. It was only on sitting back that one realized

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how impossible it is for any author to be really comprehensive about our woodlands in a single book of 130 pages. Mr. Rodgers has, however, made a brave effort. Starting with folklore and history, he goes on to a descriptive survey of England's best-known woodlands. Londoners will like the two chapters on their own woods. To Derbyshire men twenty-one lines will seem rather meagre for the Forest of the High Peak. About all the woodlands one reads sadly something like this: "There is the usual story of extensive cutting down and scanty replanting." This shame is touched on in the final chapter, but Mr. Rodgers does not emphasize enough how "ridiculously small" the finances are at the disposal of the Forestry Commission. Now that the cutting in our woodlands is so great it is wrong economy that men available for replanting should have to be sacked and their work stopped because of reduced grants.

This book can be recommended chiefly for those who wish to read pleasantly and in our woods forget for a brief time the war's unrest. Greatest solace will come from the hundred photographs and prints. Particularly true are the frost and snow scenes, the black and white of which the camera pictures with great beauty. The production of the book is up to the pre-war Batsford standard.

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